(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

**Village public telephones**

1413. SHR1 BHAG1RATHI MAJHI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is adopting any procedure for installing the Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in villages under the Bharat Nirman Programme;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the total number of villages where telephone connections have installed in the State of Orissa so far under this scheme, the details, district-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) and (b) Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) entered into an agreement with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) in November, 2004 for provision of Village Public Telephones (VPTs) in 66,822 unconnected villages in the country progressively by June, 2008. This excludes villages having population less than 100, those lying in thick forest areas and those affected by insurgencies.

(c) As on 31.12.2007, 1,227 villages in the State of Orissa have been provided with VPTs by BSNL. A statement indicating District-wise number of villages provided with VPT facility has been given in the Statement.

*. Statement*

*Status of District-wise number of villages provided with VPT facility as on* 31.12.2007

| SI. No. | Name of the District | Total number of new VPTs installed |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Balasore | 4 |
| 2. | Baripada | 41 |
| 3. | Berhampur | 47 |
| 4. | Bhubneswar (Puri) | 249 |
| 5. | Bolangir | 61 |
| 6. | Cuttack | 7 |
| 7. | Dhenkanal-Keonjhar | 68 |
| 8. | Kalahandi (Bhawanipatna) | 78 |
| 9. | Koraput | 402 |
| 10. | Phulbani | 103 |
| 11. | Sambalpur | 89 |
| 12. | Sundergarh (Rourkela) | 78 |
| | TOTAL: | 1227 |